

Where was your first Dylan concert and what was it like? **July 1st 1978 in Zeppelinfeld in Nurberg**

In 1978 I was a fan of his music since almost ten years
My cousins , all few years older than me, were my mentors to introduce me to his music
I remember listening for the first time to Don't think twice together
And then watching one of my cousin playing it back on his guitar, fingerpicking style
But I fell in love discovering Bringing it all Back Home
That voice! Those words! A new horizon a new world opened up to me.!
It was '69 and we did not know is full body of work. So what a fun to go hunting in few months so many unknown records.
My first buy on real time was Nashville Skyline but I had to wait two more years to discover John Wesley Harding.
But the most surprising listening to his new records was sure for Blood on The Tracks
So, you can imagine how frustrating it was in January 1974 to read on my Italian front page newspaper, that it was starting a national US Tour with The Band and not having the smallest chance to go to see him live.
And more again, just two years after, he was on tour again, still just US though! '76 too!
We had the luck to see on National TV the Hard Rain live show: and that's was the end for me; never recovered since from strong Dylan disease: I was looking everywhere, everyday, non stop, for Dylan material, articles, books, records, photos, connections, anything regarding him.

Good thing it was I was not alone: my next to younger cousin of the 4, 2 years older than me, was part of the same hunting team. And we never ever would have thought to have the chance one day to really see him live on stage.
But, Street Legal appeared, I was desperate in love with that record, and at the same time, out of the blue, I saw an ad on Ciao 2001, one the famous music Italian magazine at the time, promoting a multi Italian cities buses travel to Nurberg Germany for the 1st of July, to see Bob Dylan in concert, show ticket included.
We could not believe our eyes. We did not want the bus option, and we just subscribed for the tickets, having my cousins a fast Alfetta and being the road to Nurberg almost all an Autostrada and Autobahn, 700km , 6/7 hours to reach the venue.
We left at around eleven in the night the day before, I mostly drove all the way up, and by 6.30 we were there.
That's has been the experience of a lifetime, never to forget. The show was just beyond any expectations. We did not know anything about the live shows still, just heard for few days Street Legal, and knew the band.

But we certainly did not expect that kind of amazing rhythm & blues, powerful, emotional music, louder than Eric and his band before him. Still clearly remember as he jumped out on stage and Stop crying was starting little disappointed to hear a Shelter from The Storm was nothing as the Hard Rain version. First experience of many long years of frustrating surprise of new versions of well known songs.

I feel like now, the moment when he started It's all over now Baby Blue: that was all you could expect to hear, the quintessence Bob Dylan before you eyes.

Few songs after came Like A Rolling Stone, and hit me hard deep inside my soul: finally arrived at home. I was crying.

When did you first start taking photos of Dylan concerts?

Just from that first Nurberg show. I already loved taking photos, but still nothing at live music shows. My first try, and for Dylan.

Then 1981 in London, a long gap then until 1989, when I really started to think that there was no way to see a show without snapping some shots

What are your favourite photographs you've taken over the years?

I do not have a technical kind of a critic eye to use on judging my photos at concerts, but mostly indulge on the motions they convey: to me at least.

And with this attitude, I am surely deeply connected with some particular shots.

The ones that first comes to my mind are the full band shot from just under the stage at The Roseland, of the unique trio on the front with guitars: Bob Bruce and Neil.

Or, in a different way , Bob and Patty harmonizing cheek to cheek at he same mich on Dark Eyes, at Electric Factory in Philly. Or him sharing the same mich with Van The Man in Milano while blowing hard his harmonica. And, at last, obviously the Salzburg 1996 one he choose for the video "I contain Multitudes" and inner sleeve on "Rough and Rowdy Ways"

Tell me about Patti Smith's mother?

After I developed my films of the shots taken in Philly, I decided that I had to send one of Bob and Patti singing together, directly to Patti.

After some months, and envelope from Philly arrives at home. It was a letter from Patti's mom. She wrote me that she wanted to thank me dearly for having the nice tought to send Patti the shot of her with Bob. She wrote me that they had recently a big family (Patti and all her band) party for a big anniversary day of her marriage with Patti's dad, and wanted to let me know that my photo was the highlight of the evening.

Lovely kind lady. She touched me deep.

2 years later from this letter, we had the chance to assist at a public reading by Patti in a Sydney bookstore. She was having an artist following her on tour to film a documentary on her and taking photos. At the end she was signing her book. I waited till the end. I had a large print of the Philly shot with Bob that I sent her 2 years before. When greeting her, I gave her the print as a gift. She immediately burst in a laugh, happy, covering her mouth with her hand. The movie director was on the right seated behind her. She turned back pointing at him and shouted, showing him the shot: you see this? This is how it should be!

What friends did you meet along the way? Tell me about them

Long story. I know is almost already a cliché, but really just after the first few years of following Bob on tour for more than just 2/3 shows, meeting other fans along the way, sharing travels, food, rooms, together in the crowd, seeing doors opening for us just after few words, just because we shared the same passion and were sincere, we realized that a good reason to do that was having that unique chance in a lifetime to meet and become friends with such great people around the world, that we never would have the chance to meet in a lifetime.

Claudio, Carlo, Mauro, first here in Italy in the 80's, John since early 90's, so many lovely girls to mention them all, then the great respected authorities on Dylan work, as John Bauldie, Paul Williams, Glen Dundas, Bill Pagel and at last, the great Peter Stone Brown whom I finally met in Philly in dec 2018. And unbeatable funny friends that enlightened our days, Andy, Bob, Tommy, Duncan and Dave, Tim : too many to tell.

Do you have any great Bob Dylan stories from the years following Dylan tours?

Sam

In early summer 1991 we followed the tour from Italy to last date in Denmark.

In Kalvoya we had the chance to speak with Martin Feldman and Sam Dylan.

We noticed before in Italy that both loved to go cycling on day off or before the shows.

Since my client is a leader for cycling accessories products, we gifted both with a saddle and bike computer (a very new product at the time).

We ended having breakfast in the hotel with Sam, and maintained since then a good relation that endure to this day. Last time I met him in LA and then in New York at the shows.

In LA, at the Sony Theatre, we spotted him with friends on a lodge. We spotted Desiree with her lady on the first rows near us too.

During the intermission, Sam and his friend stand in the aisle on the way to the bar. When he saw me and my son passing by, he said hello and greet us warmly. He then started to introduce us to his friends, and

laughing he told them that he knew us since early 90's on the tour in Europe. Without any advice he then straight asked me: Andrea, tell them how many shows you seen by now! I, embarrassed, try my best to be polite but not to answer him, claiming I preferred not to. He tried to insist, but, when almost accepting my will not to answer, he suddenly asked to my son: you know, how many? My son not declined to answer him, but find a way not to betray me (not completely at least): I saw 110 shows Sam!

Did you ever meet Dylan and if so, what encounters did you have with him?

Among the ones I prefer is the first chance we had to meet him. And what brought us to that.

We went seeing all the Italian shows in June 1991. Milano was the last Italian. We had been there with another couple of friends from a city just on the border with Jugoslavia.

Next show was 2 days later, one day off, in the small city of Lubljiana, just 1 hour from the Italian border. Jugoslavia was falling apart in that particular year and time, Slovenja , the Region governed by Lubljiana, was marching to war against the communist government of Belgrade,

Me and my girl, my wife now, and the other couple, decided to go there one day before the show. And we knew were to book the room, because we had the chance to get in connection with a major person among the Dylan entourage at the time.

This Hotel had a restaurant on top of the rooms floors. The evening before the show we decided to have a dinner the four of us.

To arrive you had to take a lift that opened just on the big room of the restaurant.

We noticed that nobody was at the tables for dinner. Just us. After 15/20 minutes a man we knew arrived inside, getting out of the elevator, and he was with two guys in their twenties.

They took their table one empty table between us.

The big guy then was sending eyes, face, hand , messages to us: some kind of happy, proud look of trying to say us: don't go away, stay calm, be relaxed, but something very good is happening guys.

All of sudden the elevator doors opened again: a small, curly hairs, familiar guy, together with a dark hair lady, entered the restaurant room, 10 tables, only 2 occupied, one from we four, 2 couples, another from the big man with 2 young guys, and they took their table seat in a corner of the room, 3 tables from us.

We immediately tried and succeed to make last longer our dinner.

And at one waiter we asked to bring the best bottle of red wine they had, with a written note by us as a present from us to the other couple in the corner.

When the bottle was brought on the table, they had a few words with the waiter, that was turning and looking at us. Bob almost laughed and made a little sing of thanks toward our table.

When eventually they finished and got up from the table (more or less 8 meters from the elevator door) I had a quick fight with my ego. I knew I had just 3 or 4 seconds to make up my mind: stand still as anything was happening or say hello when he had no choice other than to walk 2 meters from our table to take the elevator down to his room, or even jump up and approach him.

I am not usually a very social guy, not easy to introduce my self to anybody: well, to do that with that man that shaped my youth dreams, who I already worshipped for more than 20 years, was beyond me.

As they crossed between our table and the room wall to reach the elevator entrance, I saw myself jump up determined to fulfill my only in a lifetime chance to introduce my self to my hero, talk to him with nobody around and make it through with no harms.

Well I could not believe myself, could not recognize myself while I was hearing me introduce my self to Dylan, shaking his hand, holding his shoulder, and telling him we were from Italy there just to see him one more night, and that I first saw him in Nurberg Zeppelinfield.

He shook my hand, and said , ah, Italian! We love Italians and Italy, thanks for the wine

And they were then inside the elevator saying goodbye.

What are some of your favourite NET shows or moments from the time you've followed Dylan?

Roseland 1994. Those were 3 great nights in a row, culminating with the unique presence among the audience of Neil Young and Bruce Springsteen, that eventually came on stage for the last 2 songs on third night.

Supper Club

Those were 2 memorable nights of 4 shows, 2 per night, in a beautiful small club, with his 1993 Band, no electric guitars, first outing of some World gone Wrong songs and some unforgettable and with no possible equal of some rare old classic rarely played until and since the: Queen Jane, Tight Connection, Ring Them Bells, One More Cup of Coffee.

Loon Mountain and Montreal

In 1997 he had to cancel the EU summer tour with Van because of illness. But in august he started his US tour in the middle of Vermont mountains, on a ski slope. Seeing him on stage again few months after his severe heart illness, that scared so much all of us, just few meters from us in the daylight was something not to experience again.

Montreal was one of the first shows after his illness and we treasure so much that night because, with so great surprise from everybody, he played for the first time ever live, Blind Willie Mc Tell, a la Band cover version. What an unexpected choice.

Rick Danko

Another unique night to remember, was in Wallingford, same summer 1997 tour, when he played Wheels on fire with Rick, just few months before Danko died.

You knew some of Bob's band members from the early days of the NET, what fond memories do you have of Charlie Quintana, Big Jim, Winston, JJ etc?

We met Charlie in Reggio Emilia on July 1992. Big Jim introduce us and then we went for a lunch all together before the Correggio show. We immediately connected very well: such a nice interesting funny guy to talk to.

He helped us for all the subsequent shows we went, letting us in backstage and finding us passes to get in for difficult shows.

We went around with him in Omaha after his last show with Dylan band, just to have a lot of drinks.

He then asked a favour: I recommended to Bob to hire after my departure from the band, my best friend, Winston Watson. Please go to his room in this hotel in Kansas City before his first show and do your best to support him for the night.

And we went and did it!

JJ is another of the nicest members of the Dylan band we had the fortune to know. We were both much younger when we first met in 1991, and had many occasions to talk along the 6 years of his touring with Bob. Excellent guitar player, very soulful.

Big Jim is the great missing pleasure in the last 25 years of going to Bob shows. But, after he left him on May 1994, he then joined him occasionally along the tour. Touring without has never been the same for us after he left.

What were your feelings each time the band has changed over the years, which line-ups have been your favourite and which band members have you been most inspired by?

When did you first find out that a photo of yours was being used for the new album?

The very same day when they first used it for the "I Contained Multitudes" video. At dawn, still almost asleep, I grabbed my cell phone to check the hour and went on internet and first thing it appeared is the Vevo app launching this video. At first I was confused and thought: who is making a

joke to me, putting my photo with this video? Butthe song sounded unusual to my ears: yes, a new song . But why with my photo and who put it.

I took me half the song to realize that it was a real official launch by Sony of his new song, using for all the video just my Salzburg shot of him on stage with electric guitar.

The photo features prominently in the vinyl release of the album, how did it make you feel?

Not so many words can explain how I felt on the early morning of apr 17 , when I saw for the first time appearing the “I Contain Multitudes “ video on the web. And then again on the Rough and Rowdy Ways vinyl album sleeve: proud and happy to finally see a recognition after so many years, remembering my very young self listening for the first time Bob in the late sixties, collecting already all the album I could buy.

Have you spoken to the Dylan camp about it?

Yes, and all I can say is that has been a nice easy satisfying experience to have.

What do you think of the new album? Do you have favourite songs or lyrics?

I am not a music critic writer and so much has already been written about it. So do not think I could add much of any interest on what has already been said and written, good or bad.

The reviews I prefer were written by my friend Anne Margaret Danielle and by Harold Lepidus. So sorry not to have had the chance to discover what Peter would have commented on the album. Such a pity.

Anyway, I think is great, definitely among his best ever albums. The music is so good, and it is such a big surprise after all these years of no new original songs recorded by him. I think the long period of the American Songbook covers, on records and on stage, has been his way to find a new way to deliver his songs. The man found a way to reinvent himself one more time.

And I think this record shows his best vocal performances of the last 30 years or so.

My preferred song for now is Key West, followed close by “I’ve made up my mind to give myself to you”

What plans do you have for your Bob Dylan book? When do you intend to write and release it and how do you plan to present it? Will it be chronological photos, will the photos be alongside reviews of shows? Or stories from on the road?

I been thinking about that so many times, by so many years, and was almost doing it. But always postponed it: lack of time, not secure which way to put it together.

I guess time is arrived to do it eventually. And I think it will be a book of pictures and stories.

Do you plan to continue following Dylan on the road in the future?

If the Good Lord's Willing and the Creek Don't Rise

Who are some of your favourite Dylan photographers?

Annie Leibovitz - Ken Regan